

# Public Speaking/Professional Correspondence



## Objectives

You will learn:

- ◆ To clarify and highlight the key attributes of your NN center.
- ◆ To effectively communicate your center's story to residents, stakeholders, potential partners, and potential funders through the use of PowerPoint and oral presentations.
- ◆ To develop correspondence that effectively communicates the intended message of the center.

## Key Points

- ◆ Communication as primary tool for successful marketing and soliciting from prospective partners and funders.
- ◆ Importance of effectively developing and delivering your NN center's story.
- ◆ Presentation development process, including:
  - Creating and articulating center's story.
  - Knowing the audience.
  - Writing with a specific purpose.
  - Understanding the material.
  - Anticipating questions.
  - Verbally articulating how the center can benefit the stakeholder.
- ◆ Effective storytelling through powerful presentations and written communiqués.
- ◆ Professional correspondence as an effective means of supporting and sustaining partnerships, soliciting funding and community resources, and marketing the center's programs.
- ◆ Writing techniques that attract the readers' attention.



## Program Development Materials

### Public Speaking/Professional Correspondence

Clear and persuasive oral and written communication is essential to effectively market your center and convey its story to a target audience—whether they are residents, prospective partners and funders, or the community at large. Whether making presentations to a large public gathering, meeting more informally in small group sessions, or writing professional correspondence, your familiarity with public speaking skills, techniques, and tools will enable you to spread your message more successfully.

**You Will Learn**

**Mission/  
Benefits**

**Story**

**Written  
Correspondence**

- To communicate your center's story effectively to stakeholders, potential partners, and funders

This section will focus on presentation and writing techniques that will help you articulate your center's mission, know your audience's needs and expectations, convince them of the potential benefits of participation in your center, and support its future sustainability.

# Ice Breaker Exercise

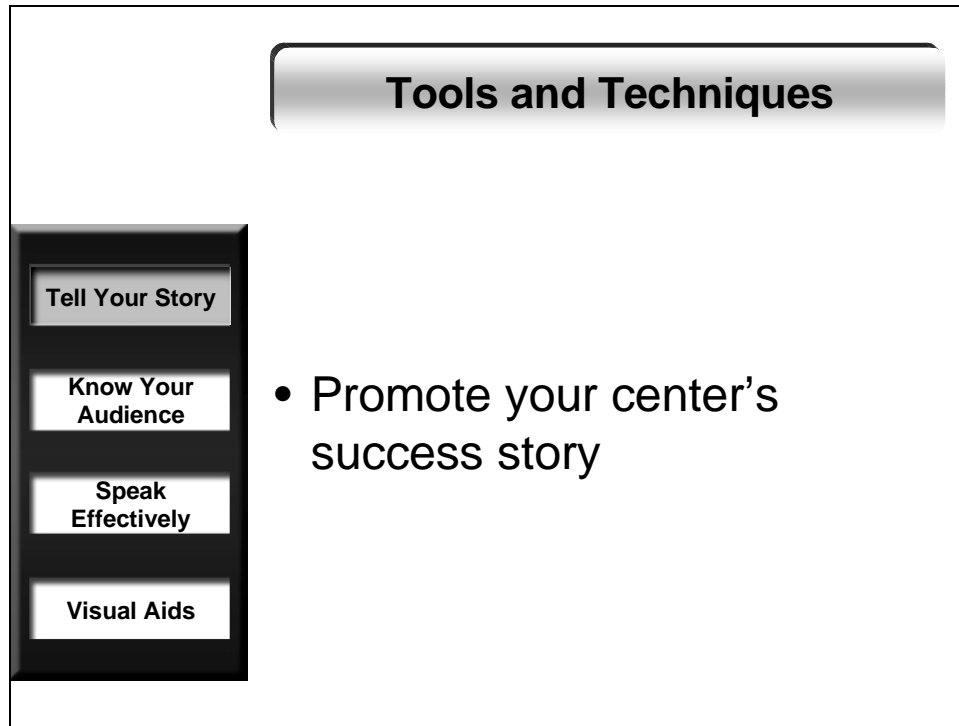
## Articulate Your Center's Goals

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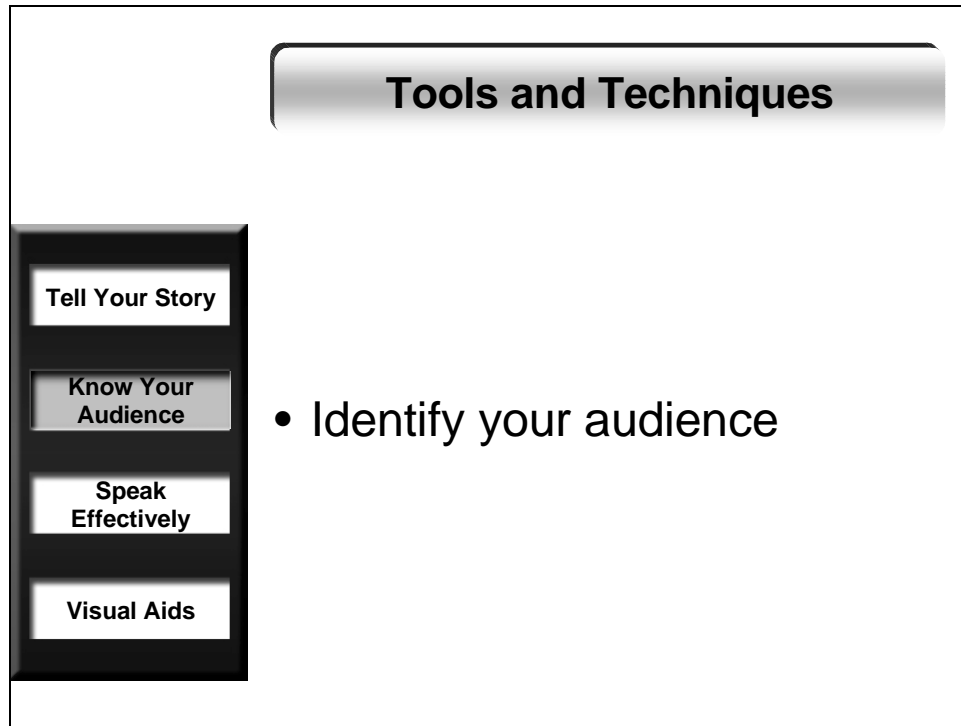
#### Tools/ Techniques

- Flow
- Delivery
- Practice

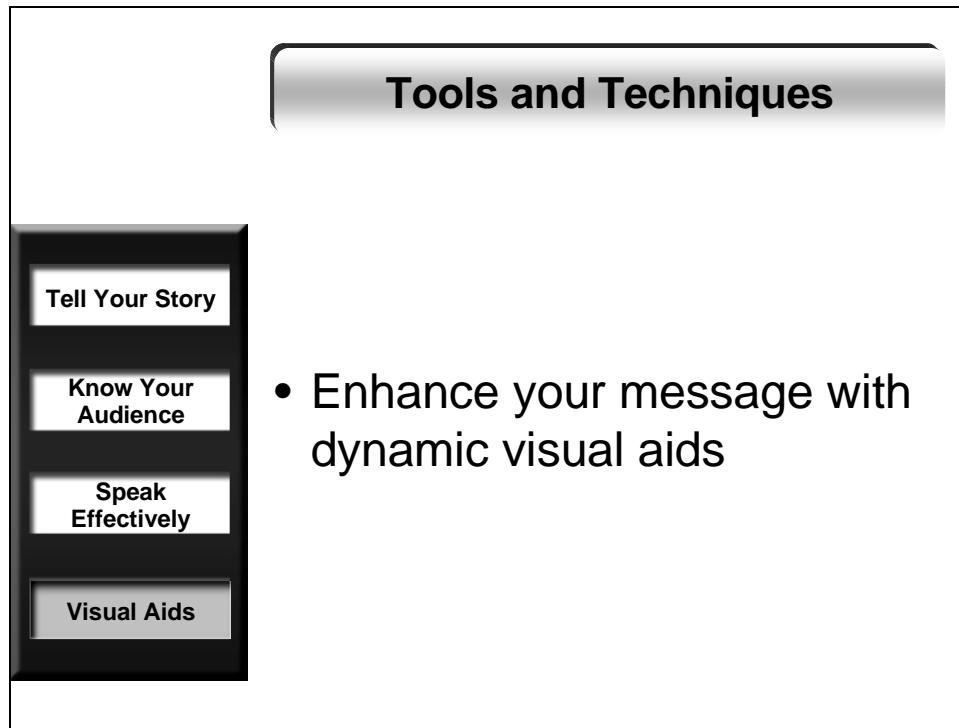
Public meetings are an excellent forum for communicating your message to a wide audience as well as building a network of supporters and sparking community interest in the center. Your presentation will be most effective when you have identified your audience and can clearly articulate your center's goals and its success stories. Your familiarity with public speaking skills and the use of dynamic visual aids will further ensure your success.



- ❑ *Promote your center's success stories*—Audiences are often most engaged with specific examples of how residents have found employment, graduated from high school, learned English or various computer software, or a combination of these skills to achieve greater economic viability by participating in job training, GED and English language classes, after-school tutoring, and other programs.



- ❑ *Know your audience*—It is important that you identify the characteristics and needs of your target audience. Will you be addressing a group of potential funders or a business consortium that may be interested in partnering with your center? Is the group comprised of center residents? If so, do they represent the demographics of the community or a particular interest group such as seniors with health considerations or foreign immigrants needing to develop English language skills?



- ❑ *Employ compelling visual aids*—PowerPoint slides, photographs, charts, and other graphics may be used to underscore or summarize key facts and ideas in your presentation. Inspect your slides, transparencies, or videotapes. Are they in the right sequence? Are they in good shape? Easel or chalkboard: Do you have lots of appropriate writing materials? Appropriate markers and erasers for a chalkboard, extra paper and markers for an easel? Can you write some of your information beforehand to save time during your presentation?
- ❑ *Meeting place*—If possible, become familiar in advance of the presentation with the physical requirements of the meeting place. If using a microphone, learn how to turn it off and on, and how to remove it from the stand. If using audio/visual equipment make sure the equipment is in working order, and you know how to use it
- ❑ *Connect with the organizer or emcee*—Be clear about who will introduce you and where you will be. Hand the emcee your prewritten introduction, and be sure he or she can pronounce your name correctly. Have it written in 18–20 point type so it is easy to read, and instructions such as “this means pause before continuing.” Let the introducer know that if there are any words they are not comfortable with, they can substitute their own.

## Tools and Techniques

### ***Flow***

The best way to ensure that your audience understands your message and is convinced and inspired by it is to learn the elements of effective public speaking. Your presentation will feel natural and clear if you focus on the most important facts about your center's goals, mission, and the importance of achieving them for residents, stakeholders, and the wider community. You will also want to review practical and possible actions that will encourage them to actively support center programs, and to summarize conclusions about how their participation will ensure the sustainability of the center.

### ***Delivery***

**Delivery**

- Maintain eye contact
- Project
- Know your subject matter
- Be energetic

It is time to look your audience in the eye and tell them all the exciting things you know they are eager to hear about your center. If the butterflies in your stomach are taking some of the joy out of the occasion, the following tips will help you to relax, maintain eye contact with your audience, and project assurance and knowledge of your subject matter.

- ❑ *Maintain eye contact*—Remember that the audience is really on your side. That is the good news. People are giving you their time and they want you to be good. You can achieve a favorable first impression by looking at your audience and speaking with confidence, which will add to your credibility and that of your business.
- ❑ *Act naturally*—Being on a stage makes you a little larger than life, but you also need to be personal in public. Warmup exercises with the audience will help you to feel and act naturally.
- ❑ *Know your subject matter*—Be sure to thoroughly prepare by reviewing your material and anticipating questions.

- ❑ *Project*—Vary your intensity. You are new to speaking, and you are not an actor, but you can add excitement to your talk just the same. Your strength is your energy, but think of a symphony. It has a slow, quiet movement and then builds to a crescendo. The variety makes each element more effective. The enemy of the speaker is sameness. Stand, move, be serious, and be funny, talk loudly, talk softly, do not speak in black and white. Speak in Technicolor!

**Practice**

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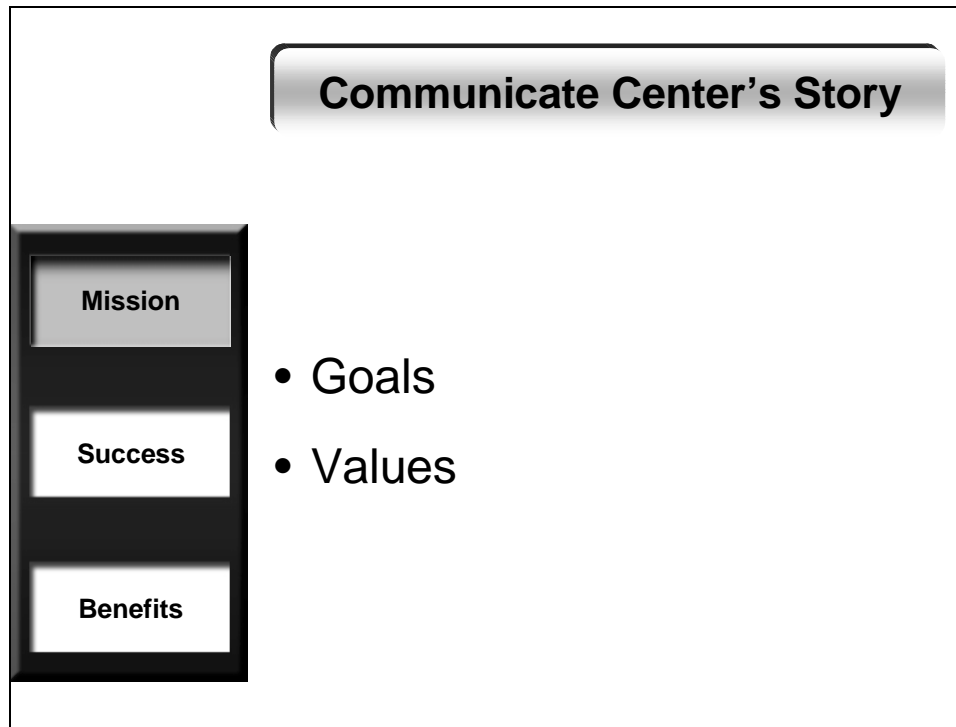
- Practice tools
- Read aloud
- Breathe and relax
- Keep time

Most great speeches were not written overnight. Make sure to practice your delivery and think about the impact of your words on the audience.

- ❑ *Read aloud*—Before making your presentation, read your speech aloud to familiarize yourself with the content. You can also use a mirror to check hand gestures and to practice rhythm and pacing.
- ❑ *Breathe and relax*—Find a private place to warm up by relaxing your body and face. Stand on one leg and shake the other. When you put your foot back on the ground, it is going to feel lighter. Now, switch legs and shake again. Shake your hands...fast. Hold them above your head, bending at the wrist and elbow, and lower them. This will make your hand movements more natural. Relax your face muscles by chewing in a highly exaggerated way. Do shoulder and neck rolls.
- ❑ *Keep time*—Check the time it takes to deliver your presentation so that you can respond to any questions from your audience.



## Communicate Your Center's Story



Neighborhood Networks centers provide opportunities for education, training, support services, and connections to the surrounding community for residents of multifamily apartment complexes. Particularly when presenting to potential partners and funders, key points you will need to convey about what makes your center a unique and vital part of your community center around its mission, goals, and values, which may include:

- ☐ *Community outreach*—A Neighborhood Networks center is for residents of “underserved communities,” so make sure to mention that when speaking with potential partners. An organization needs to provide services to the area and a Neighborhood Networks center is a great place to begin.
- ☐ *Access to a specific population*—Do residents in your community fall below a certain income level? Are they at high risk for certain health problems? Some organizations have a mission to assist communities with certain attributes.
- ☐ *Create an active community*—Some residents are very well-informed and active in the community. This can be a selling point to businesses or organizations that may be interested in feedback, involvement, or business from your community. Some organizations may be short-handed and will gladly exchange goods or services for volunteers from the center. For example, a League of Women’s Voters might donate office supplies if residents help with a voter registration drive.
- ☐ *Provide meeting space*—Many community organizations simply do not have adequate space to hold meetings or activities. If your center has available space, offer it.
- ☐ *Access to computers and Internet*—In return for volunteers, goods, or services from a partner organization, your center could offer the organization’s members or staff access to computers for a set number of hours a week to surf the Web, do word processing, manage finances, or join in computer classes ongoing at the center.

- ❑ *Share staff*— If the partner organization is short-handed and your center can handle it, it may be possible to share staff time or expertise. Make sure to offer the assistance of your center staff or volunteers if you are able to.

### **Effective Written Correspondence**

**Effective Written Correspondence**

- Delivery
- Business correspondence
- Direct mailings

Whether soliciting funds, notifying your community about center openings, events, and programs, or communicating with potential partners, you can enhance your message by reviewing the basics of effective business correspondence.

#### **Delivery**

A letter to prospective partners, funders, and businesses in your community should be direct and to the point. You can be most informative and persuasive by keeping your approach simple, yet professional and to the point, and by using clear, concise language.

## Business correspondence

### Business Correspondence

- Style
- Stationery
- Faxes
- Electronic memos
- Thank you notes

- ❑ **Content**—All correspondence should begin with a clear indication of the purpose for the letter. You only have a minute to convince the reader that your correspondence is valuable and of interest to them. Make your point quickly and be certain that everything that follows supports your main point. The initial sentence of each paragraph in the letter should guide the reader through a well-thought-out process and into your conclusion: “A partnership with my NN center is just what you need!” Formal business stationery should be used, ideally with the center’s letterhead and perhaps a byline that conveys your center’s mission and objectives.
- ❑ **Follow up**—With so many groups vying for the attention of the potential partner, it is imperative that you keep your center in the spotlight. Following up with a quick letter that documents the interaction is recommended. The correspondence should begin with a clear indication of the purpose. Remind the reader who you are and why you are writing. For example, “it was a pleasure meeting with you on (insert day of the week and date) to discuss your potential interest in providing resources to the Acme NN Center.” The followup should also remind the reader of the agreed upon action (if applicable) or it could simply be an opportunity for you to thank them for their interest.
- ❑ **Data and promotional materials**—You should draw from your business plan the relevant data on your NN center that you feel is most applicable to the target audience. This information should be presented in a clear, concise, and easy-to-read format. Your promotional materials should enable the reader to see a place for themselves in your NN center. Make sure that the material accurately represents the full diversity of services, programs, and center participants.
- ❑ **Invitation to visit the NN center**—If a picture is worth a thousand words then just imagine what a site visit to your center is valued at! In your correspondence, do not forget to invite the potential stakeholder out to the center to “see for themselves.” Remember to strategically plan their visit during a time when the center is full of activity and the residents are actively engaged in the programs you offer. Have success stories in mind that you can share as you give them a tour of the center.



## Activity

### Group Exercise #1

- An electronics store has opened in your neighborhood
- Your center has been developing community announcements and training residents in bookkeeping and cash register key punching
- Write a letter of introduction for the store owner

### Group Exercise #2

- You pass an electronics store that just opened in your neighborhood; you see the owner inside
- Write a script of what to say if you approach the owner



## Online Resources

*[ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/section\\_1029.htm](http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/section_1029.htm)*

This article provides information on the basic principles of oral communication. It discusses the key elements of a successful presentation and provides a detailed overview of the steps involved in the planning, preparation, and delivery of oral presentations.

*[ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/section\\_1081.htm](http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/section_1081.htm)*

This article provides information on the basic principles of written communication to potential participants. This type of communication is often used to give a written overview of an organization that explains its purpose, highlights common interests, and suggests areas of possible involvement. The article provides information on different writing techniques, design, and style content.

*<http://ecn.ab.ca/toast/tips.html>*

This site provides public speaking tips that are adapted from Toastmasters International manuals. The site guides speakers on everything from planning a presentation to handling questions and answers following presentations. Additional topics provide guidance on dealing with nervousness and the proper etiquette of public speaking.

*[www.toastmasters.org/tips.htm](http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.htm)*

This site offers 10 tips for successful public speaking developed by Toastmasters International.

*[www.school-for-champions.com/speaking.htm](http://www.school-for-champions.com/speaking.htm)*

This Web site provides free online lessons to give you a start at improving your speaking skills and to overcome the fear of speaking to a group. The material is divided into the following main areas: goals, success requirements, preparing to speak, delivering with confidence, satisfying the audience, and resources.

*[www.public-speaking.org/](http://www.public-speaking.org/)*

*[www.powerpublicspeaking.com/](http://www.powerpublicspeaking.com/)*

This Web site offers public speaking suggestions on 20 topics through over 100 relevant articles. The topics include the audience, handouts, your appearance, the room set up, your word choice, and topic development.

*[www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm](http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm)*

*[www.whitman.edu/offices\\_departments/rhetoric/39inform.htm](http://www.whitman.edu/offices_departments/rhetoric/39inform.htm)*

*<http://stevefournier01.tripod.com/tips/tips-index.html>*

These websites focus primarily on the analysis of the content of your presentation along with developing supporting data for your subject matter. Additionally, information is provided regarding the outline of your presentation in a manner that helps you to more effectively communicate your message.



## Presenter Biography

**Sylvia Purvis**, an Aspen Systems technical assistance and training manager, coordinates and develops implementation strategies to provide information, resources, and funding for computer technology centers nationwide. With more than 12 years' experience, she works with technical assistance and training specialists to ensure coordination and completion of technical assistance services for the welfare-to-work program. Purvis has managed development and implementation of national public/private partnerships for the national welfare-to-work initiative, marketed the welfare-to-work initiative to nonprofit and for-profit organizations to obtain resources and funding for community technology centers, and developed implementation and promotional strategies of partnerships nationally.